

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-57. (*Canceled*)

Claim 58. (*Currently Amended*) A fax system for routing voice/video/fax mail, the system comprising:

a first fax machine communicatively interconnected directly with a second fax machine, said first fax machine including a processor and memory, and being configured for routing voice/video/fax mail to associated recipients;

said second fax machine including a processor and memory, and being configured for routing voice/video/fax mail to associated recipients; and

said first and second fax machines each including fax software to configure said fax machines to be directly linked as respective sender and receiving fax machines wherein the sender of the voice/video/fax mail is the controller of said mail at both locations thereby enabling the sender to be certain that the receiving machine is the intended recipient of said mail and cannot access said mail until the sender releases control of the mail, wherein said first and second fax machines' software further include programmed functions to configure the fax

machines in a VERIFICATION MODE for enabling the sender to access the receiving fax machine and determine whether voice/video/fax mail sent from the sending fax machine has been received, accessed and retrieved by the intended recipient at the receiving fax machine.

Claim 59. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise an operating panel.

Claim 60. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise an operating display screen.

Claim 61. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a microphone/speaker.

Claim 62. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a telephone handset.

Claim 63. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a sealed paper tray.

Claim 64. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise an auxiliary paper tray.

Claim 65. (*Original*) The fax machine according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a printer.

Claim 66. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise an audio/video recording camera.

Claim 67. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a modem.

Claim 68. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a keyboard.

Claim 69. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a mouse.

Claim 70. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a key pad.

Claim 71. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 70, wherein the key pad comprises a telephone key pad.

Claim 72. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise peripheral component interconnect slots.

Claim 73. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise voice generator circuitry.

Claim 74. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise voice recognition circuitry.

Claim 75. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a sound card.

Claim 76. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a voice/video/fax mail display.

Claim 77. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a paper scanner.

Claim 78. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a bar code reader.

Claim 79. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a finger/thumb print scanner.

Claim 80. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a retina scanner.

Claim 81. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a stylus.

Claim 82. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a signature pad.

Claim 83. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a shredder.

Claim 84. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a hard drive.

Claim 85. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a removable drive.

Claim 86. (*Canceled*).

Claim 87. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED mode for enabling a user to receive a RETURN RECEIPT

REQUESTED update automatically with every voice/video/fax mail sent to a receiving fax machine.

Claim 88. *(Original)* The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a CHECK mode for enabling a user to rapidly make a determination whether voice/video/fax mail sent from a fax machine has been retrieved by recipients at associated retrieving fax machines.

Claim 89. *(Original)* The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a FAX A CHECK mode for enabling a user to securely fax monetary checks.

Claim 90. *(Original)* The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a FOR YOUR EYES ONLY mode for enabling a viewing party to hear/see a "read only" voice/video/fax mail.

Claim 91. *(Original)* The fax machine according to claim 90, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise a retractable screen cover with eyeholes and the fax machine is configured in the FOR YOUR EYES ONLY mode operable to enable a viewing party to hear/see a "read only" voice/video/fax mail.

Claim 92. *(Original)* The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a

FINGER/THUMB PRINT SCAN mode for enabling a user to verify an authenticity of an intended recipient via a finger/thumb print scan.

Claim 93. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a RETINA SCAN mode for enabling a user to verify an authenticity of an intended recipient via a retina scan.

Claim 94. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a READ ONLY mode for enabling a user to only hear/read voice/video/fax mail.

Claim 95. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in an INSTANT STATUS mode for enabling a user to be automatically notified if voice/video/fax mail has been received at a fax machine of the user.

Claim 96. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a CARBON COPY (CC) mode for enabling a user to have assurance that voice/video/fax mail has been initiated by CC'ing a tracking number of the voice/video/fax mail back to the fax machine.

Claim 97. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a FAX QUEUE mode for providing the fax machine with a fax queue which places incoming calls in a first come first serve basis, and provides incoming callers with a prompt indicating an approximate time the fax machine will receive a particular sender's voice/video/fax mail.

Claim 98. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in an IDENTITY mode for enabling a user to ascertain whether receiving fax machine is an intended target fax machine.

Claim 99. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second devices each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a DIRECTORY PROMPT mode for enabling a user using to prompt an interconnected receiving fax machine for a directory of extension numbers available at the receiving fax machine.

Claim 100. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in an I'M HERE WHO'S THERE mode for enabling users of said fax machine to communicate in a manner similar to instant messaging or email.

Claim 101. (*Original*) The fax machine according to claim 100, wherein said first and second fax machines are configured to communicate to other fax machines in a manner similar to instant messaging or email.

Claim 102. (*Original*) The fax machine according to claim 100, wherein said first and second fax machines are configured to communicate to computing devices interconnected to a network connection in a manner similar to instant messaging or email.

Claim 103. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a PORTRAIT mode for enabling the fax machine equipped with a camera to provide users with images of senders/receivers of voice/video/fax mail, or persons, or things.

Claim 104. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a AWAY MESSAGE mode for enabling an away message to be placed on a receiving fax machine to enable senders to know that a particular individual at the receiving fax machine is not present at a particular time to receive voice/video/fax mail.

Claim 105. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a REFERENCE

LIBRARY mode for providing internal/external access to documents/information stored in a storage database.

Claim 106. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a TOUCH PAD mode to activate a full size touch pad to allow participants to instant message in script.

Claim 107. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the corresponding fax machine in a VOICE RECOGNITION mode to enable the fax machine to match an intended receiver with a previously stored library of voices before transmitting a fax/voice mail.

Claim 108. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the corresponding fax machine in a PARTY LINE mode to enable a transmitting fax machine to be communicatively connected to plural receiving fax machines via a party line.

Claim 109. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the corresponding fax machine in a VIEW A DOCUMENT mode to enable the associated fax machine to determine whether a sender of a fax transmission requires previewing of an image of the fax transmission prior to electronically/physically releasing delivery of the fax transmission to a receiving fax machine.

Claim 110. (*Original*) The fax system machine according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each include fax software to configure the fax machine in a CONTRACT mode to enable the corresponding fax machine to enables a sender and a receiver of a fax transmission of a contract/agreement/understanding requiring signatures from both the sender and the receiver to view the signatures of the sender and the receiver at transmitting and receiving fax machines at both ends of the fax transmission.

Claim 111. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines each further comprise check paper including a tracking number and a bar code running along one side of the check paper.

Claim 112. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 58, wherein said first and second fax machines are each configured to activate an alarm upon a breach of security of the associated fax machine.

Claim 113. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 112, wherein the alarm results in emission of an audible sound at a predetermined decibel level.

Claim 114. (*Original*) The fax system according to claim 112, wherein the alarm results in transmission of a signal to a remote authorized party to advise them of a breach in security protocol of the fax machine.

Claim 115. (*Currently Amended*) A method for routing voice/video/fax mail, the method comprising:

providing a first fax machine;

providing a second fax machine;

communicatively directly interconnecting the first fax machine with the second fax machine for a first voice/video/fax mail transmission, wherein said interconnecting further includes the step of including fax software in each of said fax machines to configure said fax machines to be directly linked as respective sender and receiving fax machines that the sender of the voice/video/fax mail is the controller of said mail at both locations thereby enabling the sender to be certain that the receiving machine is the intended recipient of said mail and cannot access said mail until the sender releases control of the mail, wherein said first and second fax machines' software further include programmed functions to configure the fax machines in a VERIFICATION MODE for enabling the sender to access the receiving fax

machine and determine whether voice/video/fax mail sent from the sending fax machine has been received, accessed and retrieved by the intended recipient at the receiving fax machine;

transmitting a first voice/video/fax mail with a recipient fax code from the first fax machine to the second fax machine;

receiving the first voice/video/fax mail with the recipient fax code at the second fax machine; and

controlling access to the first voice/video/fax mail from the second fax machine based on reentry of the recipient fax code at the second fax machine.

Claim 116. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with an operating panel.

Claim 117. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with an operating display screen.

Claim 118. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a microphone/speaker.

Claim 119. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a telephone handset.

Claim 120. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a sealed paper tray.

Claim 121. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with an auxiliary paper tray.

Claim 122. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a printer.

Claim 123. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with an audio/video recording camera.

Claim 124. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a modem.

Claim 125. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a keyboard.

Claim 126. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a mouse.

Claim 127. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a key pad.

Claim 128. *(Original)* The method according to claim 127, further comprising providing the key pad as a telephone key pad.

Claim 129. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with peripheral component interconnect slots.

Claim 130. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with voice generator circuitry.

Claim 131. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with voice recognition circuitry.

Claim 132. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a sound card.

Claim 133. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a voice/video/fax mail display.

Claim 134. *(Original)* The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a paper scanner.

Claim 135. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a bar code reader.

Claim 136. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a finger/thumb print scanner.

Claim 137. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a retina scanner.

Claim 138. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a stylus.

Claim 139. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a signature pad.

Claim 140. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a shredder.

Claim 141. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a hard drive.

Claim 142. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising providing each of the first and second fax machines with a removable drive.

Claim 143. (*Canceled*)

Claim 144. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

mode for enabling a user to receive a RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED update automatically with every voice/video/fax mail sent to a receiving fax machine.

Claim 145. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a CHECK mode for enabling a user to rapidly make a determination whether voice/video/fax mail sent from a fax machine has been retrieved by recipients at associated retrieving fax machines.

Claim 146. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a FAX A CHECK mode for enabling a user to securely fax monetary checks.

Claim 147. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a FOR YOUR EYES ONLY mode for enabling a viewing party to see a "read only" transfer.

Claim 148. (*Original*) The method according to claim 147, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines with a retractable screen cover with eyeholes and the fax machine is configured in a FOR YOUR EYES ONLY mode operable to enable a viewing party to hear/see a "read only" voice/video/fax mail.

Claim 149. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a FINGER/THUMB PRINT SCAN mode for enabling a user to verify an authenticity of an intended recipient via a finger/thumb print scan.

Claim 150. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a RETINA SCAN mode for enabling a user to verify an authenticity of an intended recipient via a retina scan.

Claim 151. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a READ ONLY mode for enabling a user to only hear/read voice/video/fax mail.

Claim 152. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in an INSTANT STATUS mode for enabling a user to be automatically notified if voice/video/fax mail has been received at a fax machine of the user.

Claim 153. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a CARBON COPY (CC) mode for enabling a user to have assurance that voice/video/fax mail has been initiated by CC'ing a tracking number of the voice/video/fax mail back to the fax machine.

Claim 154. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a FAX QUEUE mode for providing the fax machine with a fax queue which places incoming calls in a first come first serve basis, and provides incoming callers with a prompt indicating an approximate time the fax machine will receive a particular sender's voice/video/fax mail.

Claim 155. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in an IDENTITY mode for enabling a user to ascertain whether receiving fax machine is an intended target fax machine.

Claim 156. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a DIRECTORY PROMPT mode for enabling a user using to prompt an interconnected receiving fax machine for a directory of extension numbers available at the receiving fax machine.

Claim 157. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in an I'M HERE WHO'S THERE mode for enabling users of the first and second fax machines to communicate in a manner similar to instant messaging or email.

Claim 158. (*Original*) The method according to claim 157, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines to communicate to other fax machines in a manner similar to instant messaging or email.

Claim 159. (*Original*) The method according to claim 157, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines to communicate to computing devices interconnected to a network connection in a manner similar to instant messaging or email.

Claim 160. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a PORTRAIT mode for enabling the fax machine equipped with a camera to provide users with images of senders/receivers of voice/video/fax mail, or persons, or things.

Claim 161. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in an AWAY MESSAGE mode for enabling an away message to be placed on either fax machine to enable senders to know that a particular individual at the associated fax machine is not present at a particular time to receive voice/video/fax mail.

Claim 162. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a REFERENCE/LIBRARY mode for providing internal/external access to documents/information stored in a storage database.

Claim 163. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a TOUCH PAD mode to activate a full size touch pad to allow participants to instant message in script.

Claim 164. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a VOICE RECOGNITION mode to enable the fax machine to match an intended receiver with a previously stored library of voices before transmitting a fax/voice mail.

Claim 165. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a PARTY LINE mode to enable a transmitting fax machine to be communicatively connected to plural receiving fax machines via a party line.

Claim 166. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a VIEW A DOCUMENT mode to enable the associated fax machine to determine whether a sender of a fax transmission requires previewing of an image of the fax transmission prior to electronically/physically releasing delivery of the fax transmission to a receiving fax machine.

Claim 167. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines in a CONTRACT mode to enable the corresponding fax machine to enable a sender and a receiver of a fax transmission of a contract/agreement/under-standing requiring signatures from both the sender and the receiver to view the signatures of the sender and the receiver at transmitting and receiving fax machines at both ends of the fax transmission.

Claim 168. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines with check paper including a tracking number and a bar code running along one side of the check paper.

Claim 169. (*Original*) The method according to claim 115, further comprising configuring the first and second fax machines to activate an alarm upon a breach of security of the associated fax machine.

Claim 170. (*Original*) The method according to claim 169, wherein the alarm results in emission of an audible sound at a predetermined decibel level.

Claim 171. (*Original*) The method according to claim 169, wherein the alarm results in transmission of a signal to a remote authorized party to advise them of a breach in security protocol of the fax machine.